



FINGER PALM

Palming

To *palms* an object is to secretly hide it in your hand for later recovery. For example, from a palm, you can “magically” make an object appear or secretly load an object into or under something and later reveal it. There are many different ways to palm an object. This handout covers the Finger Palm, probably the most versatile and widely used palm in magic. You don’t have to have big hands to palm. Sometimes it helps, depending on the object, but it’s not required.



Naturalness

Before you learn to palm an object, no matter what kind of a palm it is, understand this: The goal of palming something is not to make your hand look empty but to make it look *natural*. If it looks natural, the audience will assume it’s empty. When you’re out in public, look at people’s hands. Notice how normal, empty hands naturally curl in a bit. That’s exactly how your hands should look as they palm objects.

Also, openly holding another object with the palming hand adds to the naturalness. For example, many Cups and Balls routines use a magic wand. Holding the wand with a hand that palms a ball makes that hand look even more natural and therefore takes some of the heat off of it. And if you’re seated or standing at a table while performing, resting your hands on the table in a completely relaxed manner while palming an object will appear perfectly natural as long as you don’t look down at the hand that conceals the object. A fundamental rule of misdirection is that the audience will look where you look, so don’t look at the “dirty” hand.

Objects

You can palm any object that fits in your hand comfortably enough for the hand to look natural from its backside, and you can palm more than one object at a time after you gain skill and experience. Examples of objects include coins, folded bills, balls, bottle caps, marbles, sugar cubes, matchbooks, dice, dominoes, stones—any small items you use to perform magic with.

How to Finger Palm

Hold either hand palm upward with your fingers together (not spread apart). Place the object to be palmed at the base of your middle and ring fingers, then curl in those fingers just enough to grip the object. The grip should be relaxed enough to look natural but firm enough so that when you turn your hand palm down, the object won't fall out. Drop both hands to your sides. Both should look the same: naturally curled in and relaxed. Again, don't look down at the hand that's palming the object because it will draw attention to that hand.



Practice

Practice palming in both hands, and practice so often it becomes second nature. Advice given to virtually every beginning magician is to walk around with palmed objects for hours at a time while doing daily activities. And when practicing a magic routine that involves palming, practice in front of a threefold mirror and video camera to improve your technique. The last thing you want to do is to *flash* (expose) the palmed object. (See *Flashing* below).

You can make a threefold mirror inexpensively. Go to a local glass shop, purchase three 12" x 12" mirror tiles, and use duct tape to hinge them together. To do that evenly, first stack two of them, perfectly aligned, and duct tape two edges together. Unfold them flat on the floor and duct tape the other side. Attach the other mirror the same way. You should be able to fold the mirrors flat when not in use. When you want to use them, unfold the unit and place it on the tabletop you're practicing on. Adjust the mirrors to view the routine from various angles.

I also recommend taking videos of your practice sessions from varying angles. Look at what you're doing right and wrong, correct the wrong, and continue taking videos and making corrections until you're performing the routine well without flashing the palmed object.

Flashing

To *flash* is to inadvertently let your audience get a glimpse of a palmed object. Avoid *flashing* at all costs. How? Watch your angles! (See *Practice* above.) When you're performing and have an object palmed in your hand, pay attention to where the audience's eye level is. And by "audience," I mean anyone who watches your performance—from one to one thousand people.



If you have any questions, please contact Tom Interval at tom@intervalmagic.com. You can download a digital copy (PDF) of these instructions by typing the following link into your Internet browser: http://www.intervalmagic.com/docs/handout_fingerpalm.pdf.